fore. Certainly a majority of the best minds appear to have sought official promotion and social recognition through the channels of these tests, and in so doing were shaped by the conventional mold. The extreme autocracy of the Emperors was intolerant of dangerous deviation from the established Confucianism. The very practicality of the period discouraged speculation.

There was, however, no little intellectual interest. Many societies existed for the discussion and study of philosophy and literature. These often engaged in debates and not infrequently were active in politics.

Some there were who became restive under orthodoxy and wished to think for themselves. The most distinguished, Wang Yang-ming *(ca.* 1472-1528), had the courage and originality to work out a philosophy which differed from that of his class. Coming from a family of scholars and officials, he passed through the normal routine of study and examinations and spent much of his life in the service of the state, holding important offices. He was unwilling, however, merely to work for degrees. He wished to arrive at knowledge for himself, and not to repeat, parrot-like, the findings of preceding thinkers. The quest led him into opposition to Chu Hsi and his followers. That school, it will be recalled, had professed to advocate the search for truth, moral and otherwise, through the "investigation of things"—the examination of the objective universe. Wang Yang-ming, on the other hand, by an experience of sudden illumination after a long period of attempting to arrive at knowledge through the method advocated by Chu Hsi, came to believe that truth must be sought by looking within—that his own nature was a sufficient source of

wisdom. He emphasized intuition—conscience—as the channel of information concerning the moral law. As a logical corollary of this position, he opposed the dualism of Chu Hsi (although Chu Hsi was also a monist) and approached what the Western philosopher would call the position of monistic idealism. Also as a corollary, he discouraged labored thought and advocated self-discipline and action. In part Wang Yang-ming displayed a resemblance to both Taoism and Ch'an Buddhism. Probably, either consciously or unconsciously, he had been influenced by both. He was, however, neither Taoist nor Buddhist, but must be reckoned as in the Confucian line. His teachings proved not nearly